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EUR/ERA FOR SHAWN GRAY

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN'S VIEWS IN ADVANCE OF MARCH 5-6 GAERC

REF: A. STATE 23592

[1](#)B. MADRID 383

[1](#)C. MADRID 337

Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Poloff met with MFA Subdirector General for Foreign Policy and Common Security Carlos Fernandez-Arias on March 1 to discuss Spain's views in advance of the March GAERC meeting (ref A). Fernandez-Arias said that the GAERC discussion would be mainly theoretical and analytical this month, as the two major issues, the Balkans and the Middle East, are currently in flux. On Serbia and Kosovo, he expected that Foreign Minister Moratinos would brief on his trip to Belgrade and Pristina as Chair-in-Office of the OSCE.

He said that Moratinos returned from the trip less pessimistic than before on the possibility for progress. Moratinos found Serbian President Tadic more open to cooperation both on Kosovo and on ICTY than he had expected. Tadic's main problem will be to create consensus in Serbia. On Bosnia, Spain agrees with extending the mandate of the high representative for one additional year and will seek to maintain EU-U.S. unity on the issue.

//MEPP//

[1](#)2. (C) Fernandez-Arias said he expected the GAERC discussion on the Middle East to adapt a wait-and-see approach, since the NUG has not been completed. However, he said Spain feels that the current climate presents an opportunity for progress, thanks to the strong involvement of Secretary Rice, unity in the EU and the Mecca agreement which has stopped the internal Palestinian violence. Fernandez-Arias expressed his personal opinion that Israel is probably not completely dead-set against the Mecca NUG, and it could be in position to move forward.

[1](#)3. (C) Without prompting, Fernandez-Arias echoed a sentiment which other Spanish officials have advanced to embassies (ref B and C) that the Arab states are beginning to warm to the idea of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the interest of protecting themselves against Iran. He said the Arab community is very disorganized at present and is increasingly afraid of a nuclear Iran. According to Fernandez-Arias, the Arabs feel that they are caught in the shrinking space between Israel and Iran, and they need to decide with which country to bury the hatchet. He said that Spain would watch the outcome of the March Arab League meeting very closely for a positive message on Israel. He said that Spain is ready to cooperate with the U.S. however necessary and recognizes the need for a united, credible European position.

//IRAN//

¶4. (C) Fernandez-Arias said Spain supports the work that is underway to draft a new and stronger UNSCR, and he said that Spanish intelligence gets the sense that international pressure is having effects in Iran. He briefly described the March 1 meeting of Moratinos and Iranian FM Manuchehr Mottaki, while cautioning that Mottaki is not a particularly relevant player in the Iranian nuclear debate. The Spanish sense from the meeting was that Iran is feeling pressure not just from the U.S. but also from Europe and neighboring nations. Fernandez-Arias emphasized the importance of maintaining support and pressure from Russia and China in order to present a united front.

//SUDAN//

¶5. (C) Spain is not a particularly active leader in the EU on Sudan, but Fernandez-Arias noted that Deputy Foreign Minister Bernardino Leon and Secretary of State for International Cooperation Leire Pajin had just returned from a visit to Darfur and were deeply affected. He said that Spain would pressure the EU to reallocate assistance funds to help support the UN and AMIS missions. He added that it was nearly impossible for Spain to contribute directly to an AMIS mission because of legal restrictions on the use of assistance money to fund foreign military operations, but he said that Spain would be a strong supporter of EU action.

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